

Effective Communication on Tobacco Product Risk and FDA Authority

Effective Risk Communication on New and Emerging Tobacco Products (Project 2)

Sutfin, Erin L.

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Abstract:

The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (FSPTCA) gave the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) broad authority to regulate cigarettes, roll-your-own tobacco and smokeless tobacco to protect public health. The FSPTCA also gave the FDA authority to assert jurisdiction over other tobacco products, which the FDA indicated it intends to do. This will include new tobacco products widely used by adolescents and young adults, including electronic cigarettes, hookah tobacco, cigarillos/little cigars, and dissolvable tobacco, collectively known as “other tobacco products” (OTPs). While cigarette smoking by adolescents and young adults has decreased, OTP use appears to be on the rise. Although OTPs contain harmful constituents and have negative health consequences, adolescents and young adults often underestimate the health risks of OTP use. Once the FDA asserts jurisdiction over OTPs, it will have a unique opportunity to inform the public about the health risks and constituents of OTPs. To do so, the FDA will need evidence, which is currently limited, on how to convey accurate risk perceptions to consumers. We propose to develop and test OTP warning messages, with a focus on vulnerable populations, including adolescents and young adults and gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. In Aim 1 we will identify perceived risks, knowledge of, and attitudes towards harmful constituents and health risks of each type of OTP among adolescents (age 13-17) and young adults (age 18-25) to inform the development of OTP risk messages. First, we will conduct focus groups with adolescents and young adults to explore attitudes, perceived risks, and knowledge of OTPs. Next we will conduct a population-based phone survey (n=1,600, ages 13-25) to assess OTP attitudes among a large national sample. In Aim 2 we will develop a library of OTP risk messages that increase accurate risk perceptions. We will test these messages qualitatively using a second round of focus groups and quantitatively through an online survey with 880 adolescents and young adults. Based on these studies, we will select the two most promising messages for each OTP that increase accurate risk perceptions for further testing. In Aim 3, we will establish the real-world impact of OTP risk messages (developed in Aim 2) appearing at the point-of-sale. To do so, we will conduct a cluster randomized trial at 30 convenience stores to assess OTP message impact on 3,000 adolescent and young adult patrons’ risk perceptions; attitudes, knowledge, and susceptibility among non-users; and quit intentions among users.